

This Station

THERE is an R.A.F. station at the edge of South-Eastern England which is one of the oldest in the Service. It was started before the last war, and has been in constant use ever since.

As a front-line 'drome in 1940, it took a major part in the Battle of Britain until it was ultimately rendered unusable due to the intensive German attacks.

Since then it has not been used as an operational station. It's fighting the enemy in a different way—as a Re-selection Centre for battered and war-strained air crews. To-day, thousands of R.A.F. air crews are winning the victories which in 1940 this station helped to make possible.

As you drive along the 'drome you can still see signs of the great battles of 1940. Here, the first spring flowers are blooming in the ruins of a munitions store. Further on, the weeds have grown over the concrete floor of what was once a hangar.

But, still further on, you can see the new station which has been built on the ruins of the old. New hangars and buildings have sprung up. The place is like a small city in itself. Large huts for airmen and W.A.A.F.s, sprawling buildings for offices and stores, fire stations, power houses, churches, and even a water tower.

The station is the work-place for hundreds of busy R.A.F.s and W.A.A.F.s. Its personnel are always changing—yet there is a homely atmosphere here. Carefully tended gardens and tennis courts. Pleasant lawns and bowling greens.

They're there because many of the air crews sent here for re-selection are in a bad state of health and need recreation and pleasant surroundings.

There is a large hospital and an extra staff of doctors and neurologists. Neurology and psychiatry play a large part in deciding what is wrong with the particular airman in ques-

tion. It may be combat exhaustion, or it may be a case of nervous debility due to some great domestic worry.

It has been found, for example, that airmen whose wives are expecting a baby are inclined to suffer from anxiety neurosis. Whatever it is, the airman is medically examined and sympathetically interviewed by a board of doctors, neurologists and psychiatrists. There is also a flying officer present at these interviews.

A decision is reached, and, according to it, the airman may be recommended to be grounded, promoted, pensioned, or anything else.

While he is at the station he is looked after by welfare officers, who arrange dances, shows, films, and extended compassionate leaves. In fact, every effort is made to enable the gun-dazed or utterly exhausted airman to relax and enjoy life.

Back in '41, when a disabled bomber used to land, the standard gag of the pilots was, "Well, drain out the rear gunner and order another turret!"

Nearly, the guns of Ack-Ack batteries open up in practice at some target. It was here that the pilot of a much-peppered target-towing aircraft said to the C.O. of a gun battery, "Will you please tell your men that I'm towing this damn target, not pushing it!"

Some men are transferred from one air-crew category to another. For example, a pilot may for some reason be transferred to air gunner. There

Hundreds of busy R.A.F.s and W.A.A.F.s—lovely gardens and tennis courts—a homely atmosphere—here it is that Air crews recover their health before re-selection, writes
Air Correspondent PETER VINCENT

Won't Lie Down

are training facilities on the aimers—all can commence their station to teach him the elements of his new job. Wireless while waiting to be posted. operators, navigators, bomb-

Of course, the dear old Navy is established here, too. Actually, it's only right, as the place was once an R.N.A.S. station. In their Mess there are photos of R.N.A.S. pilots flying impossible-looking bits of string and matchstick. One old pre-1915 plane was captioned as having a maximum speed of 65 m.p.h. in a following wind!

The highest part of "the village" is about two feet above sea-level. The rest is below. They say the ground is so low in these parts that if you dug a hole through the turf the whole place would sink!

As you pass the munitions store, with its hundreds of rocket war-heads, each the size of a six-inch shell, and vast piles of explosives, the S.P.s on duty come out and look you over. They don't trust anyone, those chaps. But, sitting as they are on several tons of T.N.T., you can't really blame them!

At the edge of the field is one of the many concrete gun emplacements. During 1940 this emplacement shot down nine Jerries by itself, before getting a direct hit. A few crocuses are growing amid its slabs of cement and barbed-wire entanglements. From one corner of the emplacement, which is still standing, you can see for miles across the flat, even land. The lovely green fields, the waterways and rivers, the haystacks and ploughed acres of England.

This station fought and died to preserve these things.



QUIZ for today

1. A platen is a wooden dish, terra-cotta tile, iron heel, type-writer roller?
2. When was the Loch Ness Monster (a) first seen, (b) last seen?
3. What is "Big Ben," and why is it so called?
4. How many pennies, laid side by side, make one foot?
5. What is the largest current coin in use in England?

6. Which of the following is an intruder, and why? Daffodil, Primrose, Violet, Cowslip, Buttercup.

Answers to Quiz in No. 658

1. Rare gas.
2. October 18; a dog is said to have eaten the consecrated wafer in York Minster on this day.
3. 62.
4. Carrying oats. (Havers are oats.)
5. Knives (or Jacks).
6. Mere means unmixed, pure; others don't.

Sermons in Cards

The fascination which cards has always held has been utilised in a score of different ways. A Franciscan friar attempted to teach logic, and subsequently civil law, through a playing card system; preachers have based their sermons in the pack, while in the 17th century was published—

"a Genteel Housekeeper's Pastime; or the Mode of Carving at Table represented in a Pack of Playing Cards, by which any one of Ordinary Capacity may learn how to Carve, in Mode, all the most usual Dishes of Flesh, Fish, Fowl and Baked Meats, with the several Sauces and Garnishes. . . ."

In this system flesh was represented by hearts, fish by clubs, fowl by diamonds, and baked meat by spades.

The king of hearts ruled a noble sirloin of beef; the monarch of clubs presided over a pickled herring; the king of diamonds reared his battle-axe over a turkey; while his brother of spades smiled benignly on a well-baked venison pasty.

Space does not allow mention of the romances which have been woven, the fortunes won and lost, the hearts broken and the careers shattered at cards.

"He who hopes at cards to win, Must never think that cheating's sin; To make a trick when'er he can, No matter how, should be the plan. No case of conscience must he make, Except how he may save his stake; The only object of his prayers, Not to be caught and kicked downstairs."

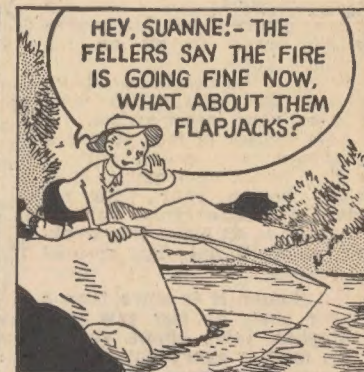
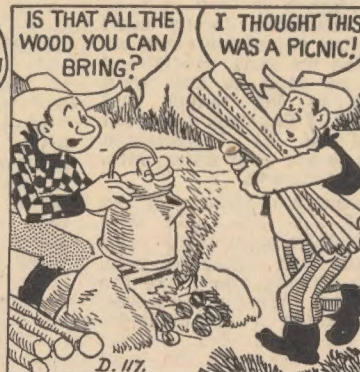
The last line of the satire is particularly pertinent, for 17th century custom decreed kicking down stairs or on occasions throwing from the window the only proper fate for a gentleman who was so injudicious as to be caught cheating.

THEIR FOLLIES ARE THEIR MONUMENTS By ROBERT DE WITT

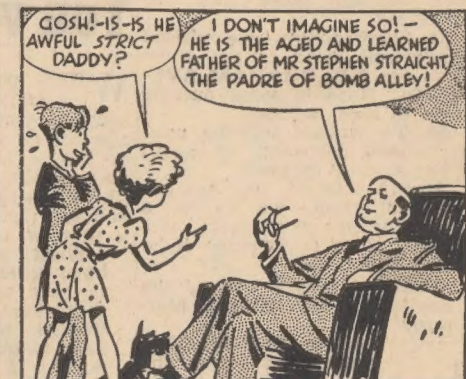
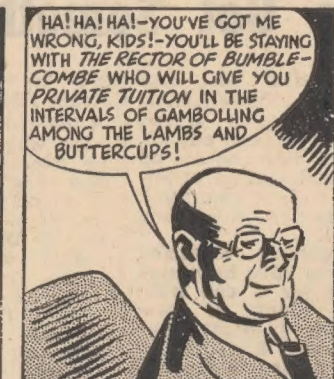
When William Hope Harvey died at the age of 84 in 1936, he was in the process of erecting an astonishing "folly" in the middle of the Arkansas desert. This was a pyramid 120 feet high on a base 32 feet square. The pyramid was to contain books and photographs of every phase of modern life, with working models of aeroplanes and machines of all kinds. It was to be hermetically sealed after the air had been pumped out.

Harvey was convinced that our civilisation was rapidly coming to an end, and had prepared an explanation of the reasons for inclusion in the pyramid. The inscription on the outside was to be: "When this can be read, go below and find a record of and the causes of the death of a former civilisation." Only the foundations of the pyramid had been completed when he died.

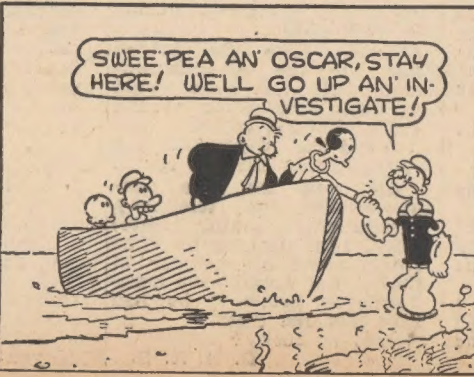
BEELZEBUB JONES



BELINDA



POPEYE



Wangling Words No. 598

1. Behead a command and get a spinner.
2. Add two letters to a musical instrument, and get another one.
3. Of what common word is GMARO the exact middle?
4. The two missing words contain the same letters in different order: She saw a remarkably cheap — skin coat at the — yesterday.

Answers to Wangling Words—No. 597

1. C—link.
2. EI from SOVEREIGN equals GOVERNS.
3. KNOWLEDge.
4. Alter, later.

JANE

Sailor Tom, Sheikh of Kishm

DETERMINED to prepare for a brave new world, an English seaman who gained a throne has just issued his peace plans for one of the strangest kingdoms in the world. Forty years ago, Tom Horton, a tailor's assistant, set out across the sea to make his fortune. Now he is ruler of an island in the Persian Gulf, and recently celebrated the thirtieth year of his reign.

His amazing career commenced when his ship accidentally left him behind at Jeddah. As badly off as any shipwrecked Crusoe, he was stranded in an unknown country, knowing nothing of the language or customs. He begged in the evil-smelling streets, and learned a few words of the Arabic tongue. He undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca through the dangerous country of the Hejaz.

His "career" had begun. There he fell in with a rich merchant, Ras Bidah, and travelled with him up and down the length of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

Landing a cargo of human beings at a village near the mouth of the Tigris one day, Horton saw them driven off screaming, victims of the guards' three-thonged whips. Mad with anger, Horton himself seized a lash and attacked the guards viciously.

As a result he lost his job. He found himself in Basra, once more with but a few coins in his pockets. His knowledge of cloth now stood him in good stead. He bought up bales of fabrics on the quaysides, and determined to gain the wholesale trade of the city.

Ten years later Thomas Horton was known as Musulman Hajo, chief merchant

in Basra, famed throughout Persia and Arabia for his splendid bargains, owner of a fleet of merchandise ships that sailed up and down the Gulf.

When Eli, Sheikh of Kishm, travelled from the island over which he ruled into Basra town, a call upon Horton was a sheer necessity. Only Horton could supply bales of stuffs at such a discount. It was by more of a courtesy than anything else that Eli appointed Horton commander of his naval forces.

Horton quickly took advantage of his new position. He was fed-up with trading, fed-up with the incessant haggling in the market-places. He wanted to settle down—in a home somewhere, and perhaps with a wife.

He sailed with the astonished sheikh back to Kishm, a

palm-girt island set in still waters. Horton had not been in the royal palace very long before he learned that the prisons were full to overflowing with the unfortunate victims of Eli's taxation system. The peasants had either to pay over 90 per cent. of their annual profits—or suffer death.

Dissatisfaction reigned everywhere. The subjects of Kishm were little better than slaves. Uneducated, unclothed, ill-housed, they thirsted for vengeance—but continued to suffer for want of a leader.

Their plight would have been no justification for Horton turning against his patron, but Eli was hated equally by his dusky-eyed wife. He was a tyrant, and his palace was the scene of riotous orgies.

Horton hatched a plot. It consisted of nothing more than

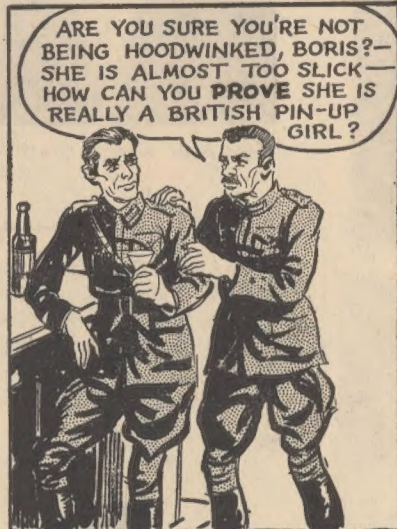
an appeal to the people when they came to town to deliver their annual taxes. It was sufficient.

He went straight away to the mosque, around which dense masses of people had assembled. No one knows what he said to them in his fluent Arabic, but there was an uprising in Kishm that night.

Sulphur fires were set burning around the palace walls to force Eli to come out. Horton then led an attack on the palace, the mob behind him flinging salt into the eyes of the few soldiers who ventured to defend their king.

Thus Eli was deposed and Thomas Horton became Sheikh of Kishm, and when Eli died in Basra a short time later, Horton married the widow.

RONALD GARTH.



Jack Greenall
Says:
Ain't
Nature
Wonderful!

THE RABBIT.

THE Rabbit's love-life is notorious; let's leave it at that. When scared he thumps the landscape with his hind legs. The fat-head, he should be up and away before the row starts, but then he's just a rabbit. He eats practically anything; rabbits nearly ate Australia.

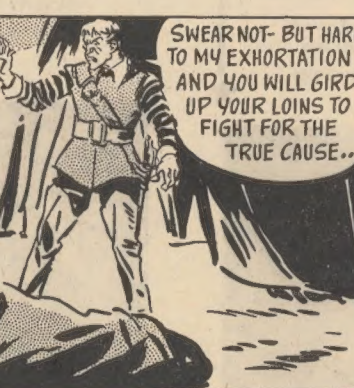
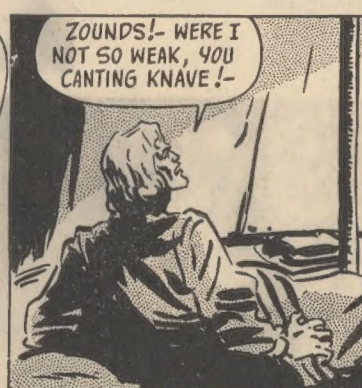
There are many varieties: Lop-eared, with a heavy dew-lap (you all know what that means) Angola and Chinchilla. The Rabbit, when uncivilised, live in a burrow, and there he feels safe. He's a lot to learn.

Young Rabbits are born without hair and with their eyes closed. Life's worries begin when they open them. Rabbits, apart from all other pastimes, are always eating, and their sanitary habits are best not mentioned. Rabbits have big "goo-goo" eyes, but they are far from cissies.

RUGGLES



GARTH





For P.O. Tel. Andrew Spratt. Who's this with your wife? Why, it's your nephew, little Lesley Hakin, who has five Uncle Andys, but you are "Uncle of the Submarines" to him.

Here are the Pictures that Six more Submariners from the North want to See



For A.B. Arthur Buchanan. Chrissie, Chrissie's baby (John Arthur), Bertie and Mother, all saying "Cheerio" to you.



For A.B. Graham Aveyard. Doreen, Kathleen, Baby Faith, Mother Aveyard, Young Melvyn and Dad—not to forget Beauty and Floss.



For A.B.-Sto. Pat Lennon. Mother with Sister Ann and her family send a cheer from Glasgow.



For P.O. Tel. George Davison. Look at your little niece and your sister, and then say (to yourself) what memories the picture brings!



For A.B. George Palmer. Mother, Sister Hannah, Sister Doreen, six-year-old Joan and the dog hope they will be seeing you soon.